

## Article

# Healing by Spiritual Possession in Medieval Japan, with a Translation of the *Genja sahō*

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**Abstract:** From the mid-10th century onward, in cases of illness, the Japanese aristocracy relied on new Buddhist healing methods based on spiritual possession techniques. This essay examines the features and procedures according to which monks and mediums operated the healing. This method, of Indian origin, was imported in Japan through Esoteric Buddhism, and was adapted in order to fit healing purposes. The author focuses his analysis on the role played by an invisible “spirit” who acted to catch the ill-causing demon within the patient’s body and expelled this malign entity from it. The article ends with a translation of a unique ritual text entitled *Genja sahō* 驗者作法, which describes these rituals in detail.

**Keywords:** Buddhist healing ritual; spiritual possession; *āveśā*; *genja*; *gohō*

## 1. Introduction

One of the most memorable chapters in the epoch-making book by Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, titled “Genealogy of Spirit Possession”, begins with this paragraph (Strickmann 2002, p. 194):

Readers of the elegant literature of medieval Japan have no doubt been struck by the frequency with which spirit possession is described. It would seem that in tenth- and eleventh-century Kyoto, the court was regularly plagued by hordes of malicious demons who attacked women of distinction. Their raucous voices punctuate the refined novels and diaries written by aristocratic women of the time. Women were, indeed, the demons’ principal victims (though men might also be attacked), and a wide array of maladies was laid at the demons’ door. The most impressive accounts of demonic activity, however, come in connection with the culmination of pregnancy, often that of empresses or imperial consorts. At such times, to counter these spirit-world forces, a group of distinguished senior monks would be called in to chant scriptures throughout the lying-in period. No doubt this precaution was frequently effective. Yet the cases that stand out in the literature owe their prominence to the catastrophic demonic activities that oftentimes ensued. It was when a woman cried out in her labor pains that the demons were made manifest. And we learn of the demons’ presence only through the activities of the monks, who, far from being mere scripture-readers, then became exorcists. [ . . . ]

Indeed, it is true that the allegedly serene world of the Heian period literature is full of vociferations of demons and exorcists who fight at the bedside of ill aristocrats and imperial family members. Although Strickmann points out “the catastrophic” results of some unsuccessful rituals, a happier case may be recalled from the famous *Pillow Book* (*Makura no sōshi* 枕草子) by Sei Shōnagon 清少納言 (late 10th to early 11th century), which has the advantage of describing in full detail the process of such a ritual of healing by spiritual possession. Despite its length, this scene is most interesting. I quote the whole passage (Supplementary Section 23) from the translation



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by Meredith McKinney, which I have slightly modified by adding original terms and expressions (McKinney 2007, pp. 251–53):<sup>1</sup>

A grove of tall pines shades the mansion, and all the eastern and southern lattice shutters are raised, providing a wonderful coolness to the unobstructed view through to the Inner Chamber. There we see an enclosure of large standing curtains, and before it on a straw cushion sits a most handsome priest of around forty, beautifully attired in ink-black priestly robe and silk-gauze surplice, clove-tan fan in hand, intently chanting mantras (*darani wo yomi itari* 陀羅尼を讀みたり).

The mistress of the house lies racked with suffering, in the grip of spirit possession (*mononoke ni itō nayameba* もののけにいたう悩めば). A hefty young girl has been chosen as the medium (*utsusu beki hito* 移すべき人, literally, the person to whom [the evil pneuma is] to be moved), and she now shuffles out on her knees, wearing a gossamer silk shift and long brightly-coloured skirted trousers, and seats herself alongside the curtained enclosure. The priest twists sideways to hand her the splendid gleaming single-pointed vajra (*tokko* 獨鉗), and continues his awe-inspiring flow of supplications and mantras.

A large number of gentlewomen are seated nearby as witnesses, watching the proceedings with riveted attention. It isn't long before the medium begins to tremble (*furui izu* ふるひ出づ) and falls into a trance (*moto no kokoro usete* もとの心失せて, literally, she has lost her original mind), and submissively behaves according to the practice. The awesome power of the Buddha thus reveals itself in response to the priest's invocations.

The brothers and relatives of the possessed lady meanwhile are free to come and go from the room. Were she in her right mind, how appalled and ashamed the medium (*tsuki bito* 憑き人) would be to realize just what is taking place before the reverent crowd of people gathered there watching her. While well aware that this suffering is [the spirit's and] not the girl's own, nevertheless those who know her are filled with pity to witness her fearful lamenting and wailing, and they sit beside her and attempt to keep her clothing straight as she writhes there.

In due course the patient improves, and the priest orders that medicinal tea be given to her. Some of the younger ladies retire to the kitchen area to bring it, and they hurry anxiously back with it to see how she is. They're attired in beautiful shifts, and their pale violet-grey trains are quite pristine and undishevelled.

The spirit is forced to grovel and beg for forgiveness, then is finally dismissed. Returned suddenly to her senses, the medium is now aghast. How extraordinary, she thinks. Here I am, exposed to public view, and I was sure I was behind the curtains! Whatever can have happened? and ashamed, she hastily shakes her hair forward to shield her face as she moves to slip back in behind the curtain.

'Wait a moment,' commands the priest, and he pronounces a short incantation over her. 'There now,' he says with a smile when it's over. 'How's that? Are you feeling better now?' However, this seems only to add to her embarrassed confusion.

'I would like to linger,' he says, 'but I'm afraid it's time to go off [and conduct the service].' He takes his leave and, despite encouragement on all sides to stay a little longer, hastily begins to make his way out.

At this moment, a lady who is evidently of the highest rank slides out and addresses him from behind the blinds. ‘We are filled with the deepest gratitude,’ she says, ‘that you have come like this, and overjoyed that, thanks to you, the poor suffering patient has so wonderfully improved. Tomorrow too, when you have time, please come again.’

He replies briefly, ‘The spirit seemed a very tenacious one. I advise continued vigilance. I’m delighted that the patient has improved.’ With this, he makes his departure, leaving everyone deeply impressed by his wonderful powers, and with the awed sense that the Buddha himself has been among them.

Ideally, a priest should have a great reputation and be in constant demand hither and yon, and he should be accompanied by numerous assistants—handsome young boys with beautiful hair, or larger lads with surprisingly lovely hair despite their sprouting beards, or else powerfully built boys whose hair is almost disgustingly thick.

Several researchers have analyzed this record and similar ones. According to Komatsu Kazuhiko 小松和彦 and others, the ritual’s rather complicated sequence principally consists in the following phases:<sup>2</sup>

1. A person falls ill;
2. A diagnostic is made most often by a divination, which is usually performed by a Yin-Yang master (*onmyōji* 陰陽師), for establishing if the cause of the illness is determined by a demon or the vengeful spirit of a dead person (called *mononoke* もののけ),<sup>3</sup>
3. A type of exorcist, called *genja* (or *genza*) 験者, is invited.<sup>4</sup> He comes to the patient’s place with a medium, called *monotsuki* 物憑. The latter can be a young girl, a lad, or a woman.<sup>5</sup>
4. The exorcist recites a mantra and forms a mudra: by this rite, he identifies himself with his “principal deity” (*honzon* 本尊), and probably in quality of this deity, he activates an acolyte, i.e., a supernatural being generically called *gohō* 護法 (protector of Dharma; Skt. *dharmapāla*).<sup>6</sup>
5. The activated *gohō* works on the patient’s body to “hunt and move” (*karuitsusu* 驅り移す),<sup>7</sup> i.e., to dislodge the demon or the spirit that caused the illness.
6. This ill-causing spirit is forced to enter the medium’s body where it is “confined” and bound (*baku* 縛).
7. The exorcist questions the ill-causing spirit, who is compelled to reveal its identity and the reason why it wanted to harm the patient.
8. When the spirit reveals its identity, he loses its power, and is pulled out from the medium’s body, to be expelled (hopefully) forever (in fact, it may return to the patient’s body).

This is an ideal scenario. Un fact, there is probably no single document in which all of these steps are clearly mentioned. All of the records are somehow partial. On the other hand, it must be noted that the two main actors of the possession, i.e., the ill-causing entity, known as *mononoke*, and the supernatural being (*gohō*) which captures it, are both invisible beings. Therefore, their presence and acts are only presumed from the behavior and sayings of the other human actants. However, one can suppose that this type of scenario is underlying and informing many records and documents describing the healing rituals by empowerment (Faure 2021, pp. 51–106).

## 2. Possession Ritual of *Āveśa* and the *Genja sahō*

The Buddhist character of this ritual is evident, but it was Morimoto Sensuke 森本仙介 who, in 2002, first discovered its true nature by meticulously analyzing a ritual performed at the birth of the future emperor Antoku 安徳天皇 in 1178 (Morimoto 2002, pp. 227–48).<sup>8</sup> The key term was the noun *genja*, which was used to designate the practitioner-monk (the exorcist) who is the main actor. Morimoto found in a commentary on the *Sutra of Yoga and Yogi of the Diamond-Pinnacle* (*Jingangfeng louge yiqie yuqi yuqi jing* 金剛峯樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇經, T. 867) by Dōhan 道範 (1178–1252) the following crucial passage:<sup>9</sup>

The *Sūtra* says: “If one empowers a boy or a girl, one can do an *āveśa*, [so that one can know all the lucky and unlucky things of the Triple World of Three Times (Past, Present and Future); if one pronounces [the mantra of Vajramāla] for one hundred thousand times, one can]<sup>10</sup> quickly<sup>11</sup> put in *āveśa* [all the *devas* of the Triple World, so that [they will answer by yes or no all] the questions about propitious and inauspicious matters].” [According to] a commentary on a sutra, it is said that [the term] “*āveśa*” means “to bind” (*baku* 縛). It would have the meaning of “grasping and binding” (*shōbaku* 攝縛) all the evil spirits. Incidentally, the method of *genja* is said to be the method of *āveśa*. This gives the miraculous power of knowing everything of the Three Times. One should further ponder about this.

Thus, according to this text, the ritual performed by *genja* corresponds to a ritual of *āveśa*, which was related to the oracular knowledge of all of the propitious and inauspicious matters of the world. This type of oracular insight was specifically aimed toward the future and for binding evil spirits. The Sanskrit word *āveśa*, which literally means “the fact of entering” (nominal form of the Skt. root *ā√viṣ-*), designates a well-known ritual of spiritual possession, where a spiritual being enters the body of a medium who, during trance, utters oracles about future happenings. In fact, this practice is not specifically Buddhist; it is a pan-Indian ritual of possession, which developed most likely from ancient times (one of its first mentions can be found in the first *sutta* of the pāli *Dīghanikāya*, *Brahmajāla-sutta*, which may go back to the first century A.D., or even first century B.C.E.) (Iyanaga 2019a, pp. 24–25). The induced possession of a youth is not its only form: any phenomenon related to an invisible being (one’s own soul or a divine or demonic spirit, etc.), which moves from its natural place and “enters” or penetrates into any other being (a person, an object, or even a cadaver, etc.), can be termed as a phenomenon of *āveśa*.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, Morimoto found a Shingon 眞言 ritual text containing both keywords, *genja* and *āveśa*: the *Genja sahō* 驗者作法, which constitutes a part of a collection of rituals and other writings entitled *Sahō-shū* 作法集 (since there are other versions or texts having the same title, I will identify this version by the conventional title of “classical *Genja sahō*”). This collection is attributed to Seigen 成賢 (1162–1231), a monk of Daigo-ji 醍醐寺 in Kyōto; it was supplemented by his disciple Kenjin 憲深 (1192–1263). This “classical *Genja sahō*” has indeed in its title the term *genja*, and its first sentence declares: “The practice of *āveśa* means in the language of Tang the practice of “grasping and binding” (Ch. *shēfu* / Jap. *shōbaku* 攝縛).”<sup>13</sup>

The bibliography of this text is complicated:<sup>14</sup> according to the *Mikkyō daijiten* 密教大辭典 (*Mikkyō daijiten* 1983), the *Genja sahō* is contained in some versions of the *Sahō-shū* just mentioned; this *Sahō-shū* itself is contained in some later versions of the *Hishō* 祕鈔, compiled by Shūkaku 守覺 (1150–1202), a son of Emperor Go-Shirakawa 後白河院 and abbot of Ninna-ji 仁和寺.<sup>15</sup> There exist still other versions of the same text. In fact, these kinds of short ritual texts could circulate separately in several versions, or be included in other compilations. Moreover, their authorship is not always certain. All we can be sure of is that a detailed ritual text of healing according

to the spiritual possession method was probably composed by some Shingon monk around the end of the 12th century or the beginning of the 13th century. However, some versions of the text clearly state that the oral traditions about this ritual were from the Tendai 天台 school, and inside the Shingon school there were no particular transmissions focused on it (see below, note 23). It is indeed known that during the Heian period and after, most *genja* were Tendai monks (Ueno 2013, p. 86). There is also a very brief passage in a Tendai compilation of rituals, the *Asaba-shō* 阿娑縛抄 by Shōchō 承澄 (1205–1281), under the section title “*Genja sahō*.” Although this is a short text without much information, it states that this ritual must be based on the ritual sequence text (*shidai* 次第) composed by the *ācārya* Genkaku 嚴覺 (a Hieizan 比叡山 monk of the early 11th century). This Tendai version of the *Genja sahō* specifies that at the beginning of the ritual, the practitioner has to [summon] a *gohō* (Dharma protector) to possess a medium and ask him the state of the ill person (*byōja no arisama* 病者有様).<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, in an early 14th century Shingon ritual compilation, the *Byakuhō ku shō* 白寶口抄 by Ryōzen 亮禪 (1258–1341), there is a section also entitled “*Genja sahō*”, which reproduces parts of the “classical *Genja sahō*”, along with some interesting commentarial materials. In the conclusive part of this article, I will translate the “classical *Genja sahō*”, including some excerpts in notes from the text contained in the *Byakuhō ku shō*.<sup>17</sup>

### 3. How the Healing Can Occur: The Role of the “Dharma Protector” (*Gohō*)

In this section, I want to focus on the mysterious and intriguing activities of the invisible being usually called *gohō* which plays the main role in this type of ritual. In classical Buddhist terminology, *gohō* appears as an abbreviated form of the compound *gohō zenjin* 護法善神, “good spirits of Dharma protectors.” They are characterized as “good deities”, but in fact, they may be rather disquieting beings. They are demonic beings who were converted to the Buddhist Law; and when they find anyone who harms the “correct Law”, they are ready to punish him in harsh ways. In Esoteric Buddhism, the champions of these “Dharma protectors” are the wrathful Kings of Wisdom (*myōō* 明王, Skt. *vidyārāja*). They are very high-rank beings, equivalent with great *bodhisattvas* or even *buddhas* in their capacity as “bodies of wheel of commandments” (*kyōryōrinjin* 教令輪身), and hardly mobilized on behalf of individual humans. Wisdom Kings usually act in cosmic fights such as the rebellion of Śiva-Maheśvara against the Buddha Mahāvairocana. For subjugating little demonic beings or vengeful spirits of dead who cause diseases to human beings, low-rank “Dharma protectors” are evoked. They often appear as slaves or servants of great Wisdom Kings such as Acala or great *devas* such as Vaiśravaṇa. Acala, for example, has two attendants named Kimkara and Ceṭaka, and Vaiśravaṇa’s son is named Naṭa. Except for Naṭa, the others are not even proper names: Kimkara means “What is to be done?” [or “What have I to do?”] (a typical question that a servant asks his master), while Ceṭaka simply means “servant.” Although the Vajrabodhi’s narrative addition to his “translation” of the ritual entitled *Budong shizhe tuoluoni mimi fa* 不動使者陀羅尼祕密法 characterizes Kimkara as a coward and Ceṭaka as a violent figure, this kind of individual characterization is absent in original Indian rituals.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, although there exist many esoteric rituals in the Chinese Canon mentioning healing procedures by spiritual possession, there seems to be no single text where a servant deity plays the kind of role inferred from the Japanese rituals in the schema above. This is also the case in the historical records of healings found in Japanese aristocrats’ diaries and similar documents, which generally present only very simple descriptions of rituals emphasizing the identity of the demonic aggressor (whether the vengeful soul of a known dead person, a demon, or a *kami*, etc.).<sup>19</sup> This is also understandable since the “servant spirits” remained invisible entities and the makers of such histor-

ical records were probably not particularly interested in the activities of this type of beings.

However, some literary sources report a few relevant descriptions of the Dharma protectors. For instance, one interesting example is quoted by Komatsu Kazuhiko. The original story can be read in four versions in different collections of tales.<sup>20</sup> Since it is rather long, I will translate the short résumé that Komatsu presents in his book (Komatsu 1997, pp. 232–33, 260):

Fujiwara no Mototsune 藤原基經 (836–891), [a great aristocrat] who had founded a temple named Gokuraku-ji 極樂寺, fell into a serious illness. Many famous exorcists (*genja*) were invited and prayed for him, but this had no effect at all. However, for an unknown reason, no monk from Gokuraku-ji was summoned. A monk of lower rank of Gokuraku-ji, who wanted to repay Mototsune's favor, came on his own volition up to Mototsune's house's central gate, and standing there, recited the *Humane King Sutra*.

Soon after, Mototsune woke up from his sleep and called this monk to come to his bedside. His attendants were surprised that he knew about the presence of this monk, but they called him anyway. When he came, Mototsune told him: I had a dream. Dreadful demons were around me and attacking me; but from the direction of the central gate, a young boy entered and drove the demons away from me. I asked him who he was. He replied that he was a servant of a monk of Gokuraku-ji, and came there by the order of his master to drive the demons away. That monk was then near the central gate. When Mototsune woke up from his dream, he felt better.

This is a typical story reporting what was happening in the invisible world: a fight between the ill-causing demons and the Dharma protecting youth. This “super-hero” of the invisible world was a servant under the order of an exorcist. The whole healing process is dramatized and revealed in this case by the ruse of a dream; in other cases, the revelation may be done by the words of a medium who is possessed by the “super-hero” spirit when the latter locks the demons up inside her/his body.

Rethinking the schema of Japanese rituals, which I presented above, it is possible to suggest that there existed several layers of spiritual possessions. First, the ill-causing demons possessed the patient who fell ill. Then the practitioner and his principal deity possess each other, or inter-penetrate each other: this phase corresponds to the Esoteric rite of “entering oneself and being entered” by the deity (*nyūga ganyū* 入我我入).<sup>21</sup> By this possession-identification, the practitioner becomes able to use the principal deity's servant at his will.<sup>22</sup> This divine servant possesses the medium, and also the ill-causing demon, who is first moved out (or “taken off”; see note 7 above) from the patient's body in order to be tied up and confined within the medium's body. Between the ill-causing demon and the Dharma protecting spirit, there is first a fight, then a possession, which is also a subjugation, and an interrogation. Finally, the demon is expelled and banished forever—if the ritual finishes in success.

While all this process is happening in the invisible world, what can be seen in the visible world is as follows. The practitioner pronounces the mantra and forms the seal of his principal deity with his hands (when he proceeds to the identification with his main deity); then, after having prepared the medium, he pronounces another mantra, and the medium begins to tremble, a sign that the possession “worked.” Then, he pronounces querying words, and the medium, probably in a convulsive state, utters replies (of the ill-causing demon) to the questions put by the practitioner. Then, finally, the medium is released and returns to her/his normal state; the practitioner asks the patient how he or she feels, and the latter normally replies that he/she is better. What is important in this visible process is the manifestly abnormal state of the medium's mind, and the replies that she or he utters to the interrogation of the practitioner: this is somehow an “objective testimony” of what is happening in the

invisible world. Thus, one can infer that the spiritual possession has the function of providing the credibility of an invisible drama, which is revolving around the illness and the healing status of the patient. It is the recognition of this specific psychologic drama by the patient, which would constitute the trigger of the true, physical healing. As Claude Lévi-Strauss has stressed in his study, “The Sorcerer and his Magic”, the crucial condition by which magical operations (in this case, the healing by spiritual possession) “work” in a given society is the social and generalized belief in their efficacy (Lévi-Strauss 1958, pp. 183–203; see also Ellenberger 1979, pp. 3–52). Another condition is the plausibility of the story interpreting the lived events for all of the actors present in the play. Since this healing method was practiced during a long period of time, it is possible to think that the “magic worked” in many cases. Then, we can presume that the performed ritual often completely fulfilled these two conditions.

#### 4. Introduction to the “Classical *Genja sahō*”

The following is a tentative translation of the text of the “classical *Genja sahō*.” As I explained above, this is a ritual text probably due to a Daigo-ji monk who composed it in the late 12th century or early 13th century. However, the ritual itself seems to have belonged to the Tendai Esoteric tradition.<sup>23</sup>

This text contains two distinct rituals for the healing of an ill person, and a short commentarial addition. The first is a rather normal subjugation ritual, which displays only one unusual element and a peculiar emphasis on the compassion that must be addressed to the object of subjugation. The unusual element is the mention of a rite for “inviting the spiritual soul” (or “the spiritual demon”) (*shō ryōkon* or *ryōkon wo maneku* 招靈魂 or *shō ryōki* or *ryōki wo maneku* 招靈鬼; see below, note 35), which seems to be a procedure for summoning the ill-causing demon (and not a rite for “call back the soul” of a dying person or a dead, which is usually termed “*shōkon*” 招魂). After evoking the ill-causing soul or demon, the practitioner chants the words of a “vow” (*hotsugan* 發願) in which he expresses his wish to “subjugate the spiritual demon and put him in the Correct View, and fulfill him with the water of Law.” Then the ritualist utters that “he becomes the messenger of the Buddha, making the *āveśa* [method] [against the ill-causing being]” and asking for “the help of the Dharma protecting *devas* (*gohō-ten* 護法天)”, which would be added to his “majestic power” (*iryoku* 威力).<sup>24</sup> This passage seems to imply that the practitioner wants to become the recipient of an *āveśa*, to let Dharma protecting deities “entering” his body (so that he identifies himself with them) for strengthening his own power of subjugation.<sup>25</sup> In practice, this procedure shows the same rationale of a normal subjugation rite since the subjugation is always made possible only by the intervention of a buddha’s “empowerment” (*kaji* 加持, Skt. *adhīṣṭāna*), which grants the practitioner’s will to be accomplished.

By contrast, the second part of the text describes a specific ritual of *āveśa* or spiritual possession. It begins with a warning: The practitioner must be well versed in the gist of the rite and full of compassion in regard to the “spiritual demon” (*ryōki*): it is to save this demon, and not to harm him, that he must perform the ritual. The ritual itself consists of choosing a virgin boy or girl; this youth is purified and then the practitioner pronounces a mantra which “invites [the one who would] enter (*shōnyū* or *maneki ire-ru* 招入) the body of the youth”—that is the Dharma protecting deity. After that, this Dharma protecting deity binds the ill-causing demon up and drives him to enter the same youth’s body; one recognizes that this took effect when the youth begins to tremble. Then, the practitioner would proceed to determine the identity of this demon. Immediately after this operation he secures the patient’s body so that the demon would not enter (or stick to) it again. Finally, he pronounces a mantra, which eliminates the demon’s karmic obstructions and gives him the joy of the Dharma.

One common feature of these two rituals is that the compassionate mind is strongly recommended to the practitioner. He must not desire to harm the ill-causing demon since the evil being who is dispensing sufferings to the ill person is simply adding bad

karma to himself. He must be made aware of the Correct View and satisfied with the bliss of the Dharma. Such a moral justification of violent subjugation is characteristic of the Japanese medieval Buddhist logic and derives from a certain sanctimonious attitude, which can be detected in some Chinese Esoteric commentaries such as the *Commentary to the Mahāvairocana Sutra* by Yixing 一行 (683–727) regarding the subjugation of Maheśvara (Iyanaga 1985, pp. 732–43). Another aspect that can be noted is that some elements such as mantras and seals (mudras) used in the two rituals are from mixed origins: certain come from the tradition of the *garbhadhātu* ritual, while others from the *vajradhātu* ritual. In spite of this, it seems that the present text has a predominant reference to the latter ritual system since there are several references to the “Four Kinds of Glances” which are elements of the *vajradhātu* ritual tradition (see below, notes 34, 42 and 56). At any rate, although these two ritual procedures were clearly conceptualized and specifically performed in Japan, their textual and ritual sources are drawn from classical texts of Indian origins.

The final section of the “classical *Genja sahō*” contains textual additions concerning specific divinatory methods, which would be used in order to determine the prognosis of the patient’s illness, with short quotations related to this matter. It is recommended that if the illness is incurable, and the patient is about to die, the practitioner should avoid performing the healing ritual since this would be a wasted effort. This specification shows a somehow inhumane attitude of the Buddhist healers of the period, which is paired with another pungent remark about the difference between aristocratic and common patients.

### 5. Translation of the “Classical *Genja sahō*”

*Genja sahō* 驗者作法<sup>26</sup>

In the language of Tang the practice of *āveśa* (*abisha-gyō* 阿尾捨行) means the practice of “grasping and binding” (Ch. *shēfu xīng* / Jap. *shōbaku-gyō* 攝縛行).

When empowering (*kaji* 加持, Skt. *adhiṣṭāna*) a patient, one must first become [i.e. identify oneself with] the nature of the principal deity (*honzon* 本尊).<sup>27</sup> That means, one must think of one’s own body as originally being pure and having the nature of the principal deity. Moreover, one must visualize that above one’s own heart, there is the Moon wheel, on which is the seed [letter] (*shuji* 種子, Skt. *bīja*) of the principal deity;<sup>28</sup> this [letter] emits a light illuminating one’s own body, which becomes the principal deity [itself].<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, one must visualize the letter *RA*, which burns on the patient’s Moon-wheel of heart (*shin gachirin* 心月輪), completely annihilating the obstructions of his bad deeds and sufferings of his illness.<sup>30</sup> ([For this visualization too,] one must become the principal deity, [and for that,] use the principal deity’s seal).<sup>31</sup> [Use your hands] to form the seal (Skt. *mudrā*) [of the principal deity].<sup>32</sup> (Apply it to one’s own front, right shoulder, left shoulder, heart and throat, while pronouncing the mantra each time.) Use also the seal of the production of the Dharma sphere (*hokkai shō in* 法界生印) as the seal of the production of flame (*kaen hosshō in* 火炎發生印).<sup>33</sup>

Pronounce the principal deity’s mantra and throw it on the patient’s body. Next, form the principal deity’s seal and apply it to [one’s own] heart. Cast a *vajra*-glance (*kongō gen* 金剛眼, Skt. *vajra-drṣṭi*) to the patient.<sup>34</sup> (First at his right, then his left, then his upper part, then his lower part.) Having looked at him in this manner, pronounce the principal deity’s mantra; turn the seal three times to the left direction. Then with the seal, call [the ill-causing demon’s] soul (*shō ryōkon* 招靈魂).<sup>35</sup> (Use the same seal and mantra. All this is suitable if the ritual is performed during the day.) If [the ritual takes place] during the night, look at the patient, first at his left, then his right, then his lower part, then his upper part. Having looked at him in this manner, turn the seal as before [three times, to the left direction]. Moreover, there are the mantra and



seal, which are to be applied to the eyes; they are the same as before [i.e., probably the *vajra*-glance].

Next, the practitioner pronounces his vow saying:

From the bottom of my heart, I express my vow: I pray that Mahāvairocana, my saintly principal deity, all the saintly crowd of the Twin Assemblies in Three and Five Clans,<sup>36</sup> the Four Great and Eight Great Wheel bodies of commandments,<sup>37</sup> that are all the Kings of Wisdom, and the Majestic Deities of the Extra-vajra Section, all the Three Jewels, all will have compassion on me, and that the Miraculous Effect of the Buddhist Law (*buppō ryōgen* 佛法靈驗) will definitely be present before us, onto this patient; I pray that [all these saintly beings] will remove his sufferings and let him get the calmness. If there is [some being] with spiritual power (*useijin* 有勢神), which makes trouble on him, I will give the Gift of the Law (*hosse* 法施, Skt. *Dharma-dāna*) to it, and let it separate itself from the evil karma; if it is a demon with a spiritual power (*ryōki* 靈鬼),<sup>38</sup> I will subjugate it, and let it enter the Correct View. With the water of the taste of the Law (*hōsuimi* 法水味)<sup>39</sup>, I will let it be satisfied, and, becoming a messenger [or a servant] of the Buddha (*busshi* 佛使), I will make *āveśa* (*abisha wo saku-su* 作<sub>二</sub>阿尾捨<sub>一</sub>) on it.<sup>40</sup> [I pray that] *devas* of the Protection of the Law (*gohō-ten* 護法天) will assist my majestic power, and gathering their hearts, give me their protection. This is in the hope of doing good [deeds], [to plant] the Seed of Buddha. This is not in my abilities, this will be the power of the Law of Buddha.

Next, [recite] the Five Great Vows (*godai gan* 五大願).<sup>41</sup> Next, [chant] the *Prajñāpāramitā hrdaya sūtra*. Next, change the seating mode: seat in the position of squat on the heels (*onkuta-za* 嗚俱吒座, Skt. *utkutukāsana*). Having seated, with the glance of anger, pronounce the mantra of the seat:

*On kuroda jirishudi kei Un Patta* 唵句盧吒。涅哩瑟底（丁以反）奚。（形以反）  
咩發吒<sup>42</sup>

*Oṃ Krodha dr̥ṣṭi Hīḥ Hūṃ Phaṭ!* [Oṃ Angry glance Hīḥ Hūṃ Phaṭ!]

Then, take the rosary, and take also the *vajra*, raise the voice and pronounce the charm. (The charm of the principal deity.) First, pronounce the principal deity's name, and next pronounce his charm, and add the syllables "*Hūṃ Phaṭ*."<sup>43</sup> (If [the practitioner] applies the sacred power to a man, turn the *vajra* to right; if it is a woman, turn it to left. When he pronounces the [syllables] "*Hūṃ Phaṭ*", make the attitude of destroying [the evil].) Next ask [the patient] how [he or she feels:] good or bad.

After that, let [the saintly crowd] leave [the place] (*hakken* 撥遣). (Use the principal deity's seal, and turn it to left.) After that, snap the fingers, [and pronounce the mantra:]

*Gessha Gessha Sowaka* 藥車藥車莎呵

*Gaccha Gaccha Svāhā!* [Go, go, in the felicities!]<sup>44</sup>

Next, one must protect oneself, and [form the seal in order] to create a ritual area [around oneself, for the protection].

Another [recipe to heal a patient] says: Use the general seal of the Five Great Worthies [Kings of Wisdom] (*godaison no sōin* 五大尊'總印),<sup>45</sup> (That is the seal of the external five prongs *vajra* [ge *goko in* 外五股印].<sup>46</sup>) and pronounce the Mantra of the Compassionate Salvage.<sup>47</sup> [This is] the secret magical recipe [with which] the practitioner holding the charm (*jiju no gyōja* 持咒'行者, Skt. *vidyādhara*) applies the secret empowering charm of *āveśa* (*abisha kaji himitsu no juhō wo saku-su* 作<sub>二</sub>阿尾捨加持祕密'咒法<sub>一</sub>).<sup>48</sup>

Now, having received the saintly meaning [i.e., from what I understand as the correct meaning of the ritual taught by the saintly Buddha], it must be said (*shōi wo kōmurite iwaku* 蒙聖意云): If you do not know where the method leads, and recklessly bind the spiritual demons who make obstruction [i.e., who cause the illness], you surely will get damages afterwards. You should not have confidence in your power of charm and, by mistake, destroy the other [i.e., the ill-causing demon]. [If you do thus], at the moment of untying the sacred area (*geketsu no toki* 解結之時), [the practitioner or the patient] may be taken by the demon. Or at the moment of his [the practitioner's or the patient's] agony, he will have an unquiet mind. This is due to the fact that the fundamental [gist] of the Buddhist Law is to have compassion.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, if one follows the Exoteric method, one pronounces the Four Universal Vows (*shi gu-gan* 四弘願),<sup>50</sup> or if one follows the Esoteric method, one pronounces the Five Great Vows (see note 41 above), in which it is already said that one vows for the salvation of beings without any limit. If it is so, how would one have compassion for one person, while rejecting others? Producing a mind of dislike, hate and making harm is to not have compassion. Such a person would betray the Buddhist path forever. This is why, when the practitioner receives a request of saving and protecting an ill person, and wants to perform a ritual of *āveśa*, he should keep this mind:

Thanks to my past meritorious acts (*karma*), I could become a son of the Buddha; following the Buddha's saintly mind, what I do is done in order to convert other [beings to the correct path]; all my wish is that my charm power will be fostered by all of the secret saintly crowd. This is to help this patient recovering from his illness and let him be in a calm state, and to eliminate the [bad] karma of the spiritual demon, so that it develops a compassionate [mind].

Thus, the practitioner will reprimand [the demon] and say:

Your clinging mind (*shūshin* 執心) leads you toward an unfortunate destiny; because of your sufferings, you still stick to making other people suffer; it just increases your own sufferings, and there is nothing good in it. When would you be delivered? If you give serenity to others, then you would be in serenity yourself. The *bodhisattvas* take the sufferings of others, and their joy increases. You are lost in the understanding of a reasonable [way of life] (*ri ni mayou* 迷<sup>レ</sup>理<sup>ニ</sup>), and I could get a little understanding [of this]. The source of [your] great sufferings is just in the making of others' sufferings. I reprimand you now, but it is not that I have compassion [only] of this one patient, and hate you as spiritual demon. So, now, with the majestic power of the Buddha's Law, I will impart the serenity (*annon* 安穩) both to this patient and to you, spiritual demon, and make both of you enter the Correct View, and [by this act of healing, I vow that] everybody similarly [enters the Correct View].

The practitioner would have pronounced this vow and would follow the [correct] manners of the previous virtuous [practitioners], not making any infringement of the rule; if he does not [perform the ritual in this way], the demons will have opportunity [to make more harm]. Therefore, he must be sure to meticulously conform himself to the correct method and [perform] the ritual. He would call some virgin girls and boys (*mikai no onna oyobi dōnan* 未開女及童男), and choose one [of them]. Then he makes her [or him] wash her [or his] hands and mouth, to make her [or him] clean inside and outside. As before (*ue no gotoku* 如上),<sup>51</sup> he sprinkles her [or his] top of the head with perfumed water. Then he visualizes her [or his] five wheels (*ka no gorin* 彼五輪) [i.e., all her/his body] as pure. He forms the seal and pronounces the Mahāvairocana's Five Syllable-mantra (*Dainichi no goji shingon* 大日<sup>ノ</sup>五字眞言) [A VI RA HŪM KHAM].

He applies the seal on the youth's (*dō* or *warawa* 童) head, to make it hard (*kengo ni narasimeyo* 令<sup>レ</sup>成<sup>ニ</sup>堅固<sup>ニ</sup>) [in order to protect it from any evil power]. Then he in-

vites the Protector [spirit] (*shugo sha* 守護者) to enter the youth's body (*warawa no mi ni maneki ire* 招<sub>キ</sub>入<sub>レ</sub>童<sub>ハ</sub>身<sub>ニ</sub>). (He uses the Four Syllable-mantra [*shiji no myō* 四字明], which says: *JAḤ HŪM BAṀ HOḤ*.<sup>52</sup>) Then he asks [the Protector spirit who is inside the youth's body—or perhaps the patient himself?] the good or bad, death or life [of the patient] [i.e., the prognosis of the illness]. Afterwards, he pronounces again the principal deity's *vidyā* (*myō* 明, i.e., mantra). He first summons the spiritual demon of the illness (*yamai wo saku-su ryō wo ko-shite* 呼<sub>シ</sub>テ作<sub>レ</sub>ス病<sub>ヲ</sub>靈鬼<sub>ニ</sub>ヲ), and binds him and makes him enter the youth's body. If the youth trembles (*kodō* 擧動), [it is the sign] that [the demon] entered the youth's body.<sup>53</sup> [The practitioner must determine] if this is true or untrue, or if this is a demon (*ma* 魔) or a spirit (*ryō* 靈): this is recognizable according to the different expressions [of the face of the youth]. One should refer to the *Sūbahu-pariprcchā* [for the details].<sup>54</sup> If [the demon of the illness] really moves [in the youth's body], the patient gets better little by little. At that moment, the practitioner must use the seal to apply the empowerment, and make hard [the protection of] the patient. Then [the practitioner] puts different questions to the youth [that is, to the demon who is confined in her/his body].

The mantra which covers and protects (*fukugo* 覆護) the person's [or patient's?] body [is]:

*On dobi dobi kyaya dobi haramibarinei sowaka* 唵。度比度比。迦耶度比。鉢羅  
弭縛里寧。莎呵<sup>55</sup>。

*OM dhūpe dhūpe kāya dhūpe prajvāline SVĀHĀ* [OM! Incense! Incense! Make  
sound, oh, Incense! Which is burning! Felicities!]

When one raises questions to the Protector [spirit] and the spiritual demon, one must place on one's own left and right eyes two letters, *MA* and *Ṭ*, which become the Sun and Moon Wheels emitting great beams of light.<sup>56</sup> From the letter *MA*, a beam of fire radiates and burns the karmic-obstructions of the clinging mind; from the letter *Ṭ*, a beam of pure light radiates, which makes [the beings] get the joy of the Law. The seal's aspect consists in forming the *vajra* fist with the two hands, and leaving them on both sides of the waist.

The mantra [is]:

*On bazara diri shuchi ma ta* 唵。縛日羅 (二/合) 地里 (二/合) 瑟致摩吒<sup>57</sup>

*OM vajra-drṣṭi MA Ṭ* [OM glance of *vajra*! *MA Ṭ*!]

There is an oral transmission which is a method to know if the patient will live or die [i.e., his prognosis]. It says that when messengers come [to ask for a healing ritual], if they raise the right hand to the top of their head and cover their face, the patient will live. If they raise the left hand [to the top of their head] and cover [their face with it], then it is a definite sign of the patient's death. If one does not see these signs but, on the way to go [to the patient's house] while chanting the charm, encounters terrible beasts, horrible birds, or naked persons, this is negative; this is a definite sign of death. If one encounters good [looking] persons, this is the sign of the [fact that the patient] will not die. If one does not see [any of] these signs, one will go to the patient's place. If he is lying on his left side, this is a definite sign of his death. If he is lying on his right side, this is a sign of his surviving. [One will] pronounce the charm while looking at these signs (literal quotation).<sup>58</sup> The eighth [fascicle] of the *Sutra of Collection [of Dhāraṇī]* writes [the following]: [If] the messenger from the patient's house faces the southwestern side, or northwestern side, this illness would not be cured and it is not good for the master of the charm, so do not go there. If this is an aristocrat who calls you and it is impossible to get rid of [the messenger], then protect your own body; and upon arrival at his place, return quickly, do not stay there [for a longtime]. If the messenger raises his left hand and rubs his face several times, the master of charm should not go [there]. If he goes, it is not good. Either the patient

is an aristocrat or a commoner, the same is true: do as it is indicated previously.<sup>59</sup> This is an abridged quotation (*ryakushō* 略抄).

## 6. Concluding Remarks

I began this article by quoting a passage from Michel Strickmann's 2002 book, the genealogy of which goes back to his dissertation submitted in 1991. As far as I know, that chapter indicates that Strickmann was the first scholar to have identified the Medieval Japanese healing ritual by spiritual possession as a form of *āveśa* ritual of Indian origin (see above, note 8). Since then, important progresses have been done in the knowledge of spiritual possession practices and related materials in South, South-East, and East Asian religions. For the Indian world, the great monograph by Frederick Smith (2006) brought an abundant fruit of knowledge. For China, Edward Davis's *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Davis 2001), although not dealing especially with this theme, contains an amount of interesting data which contribute to the advance of studies. There are certainly other noticeable works such as Geoffrey Samuel's *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (Samuel 1993) on Tibetan context or Bizot's studies on South-East Asia (Bizot 1980, 1994; see also Crosby 2000, p. 148, p. 168). Japanese scholarship has been extensively focused on Japan's early Medieval exorcisms and healing rituals,<sup>60</sup> but the problem is that these important works remain almost completely unknown outside Japan. With the present article as well as another past publication (Iyanaga 2019a) I aimed to somehow fill this gap. Another understudied field, which has a great potential of bringing new insights, is constituted by the relevant materials that are buried in the Tantric Section of Chinese Buddhist Canon. Oda Etsuyo and I are working to gather data from this immense corpus, and our on-going result already contains one-hundred-fifty examples of texts describing diverse aspects of the practices and thoughts related to the *āveśa* rituals of mainly Indian origins (see above, note 12).

Nevertheless, this is nothing but the kick-off. If we simply take into account Japanese religious history and the ethnographical field, it is well known that spiritual possession played and continues to play an important role in many instances (Blacker [1975] 1999; there Japanese studies on this topic are so numerous that it is impossible to mention them here). However, until now, other possession phenomena than the healing rituals were nearly always thought of as purely *native* practices the origin and historical evolution of which remained understudied. However, now that we know that a great deal of healing rituals practiced during the early Medieval period were adapted forms of *āveśa* rituals of Buddhist, and Indian origin, we should start to clearly distinguish what may have been imported practices from what was probably of native origin and study their complex mingling and historical evolution (a very recent book by Tokunaga Seiko embraces this aspect, Tokunaga 2022).

Another field of research that may be promising is how *āveśa* ideas were used in the formation of Buddhist (and especially Tantric) doctrines and practices. As I have already mentioned (see above, note 21) the idea of mutual possession could be at the basis of the visualization practice of identification between the Buddha and the practitioner (*nyūga ganyū*); this is at the core of the Tantric paradigm of "Becoming a Buddha in the present body" (*sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成佛). I should also note that in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經 (*Sutra of the Contemplation of Amitāyus*), there is a sentence saying: "All the Buddhas and Tathāgatas are body of *dharmadhātu* (Ch. *fajie shen* 法界身). All this [body] totally enters (*bianru* 遍入) in all of the sentient beings' mind",<sup>61</sup> in which the term "totally enters" (*bianru*) is one of the dedicated translations of the Sanskrit term *āveśa*.<sup>62</sup> With this in the mind, when we look at the famous statue of monk Kūya 空也 (903–972) who is represented as reciting the formula of *Namu Amida butsu* 南無阿彌陀佛 (Hail Amitābha Buddha!) while the six *nenbutsu* syllables exit his mouth (and certainly re-enter in it...) in the guise of six little *buddhas*,<sup>63</sup> we

understand the profound meaning of this chanting practice. The *nenbutsu* symbolized the Buddha Amitābha himself in his living form who had *entered* inside the human body, who is *possessing* it, and who comes out from it, as our bodily respiration. This case shows that interesting subjects of studies are not confined in Esotericism only, but can be found in other areas of Buddhist history.

Thus, it seems that the possibilities of research are infinite. I would like to emphasize that all of these analytical directions should be pursued in a broad comparative perspective since the Asian Continent from India to Japan constituted one world, all of which was covered by Buddhism.

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## Abbreviations

BEFEO	<i>Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient.</i>
DNBZ	<i>Dai Nihon bukkyō zensho</i> 大日本佛教全書 (old edition). Edited by Bussho kankōkai 仏書刊行会. 151 vols. Tokyo: Bussho kankōkai, 1912–1913.
NKBT	<i>Nihon koten bungaku taikai</i> 日本古典文學大系. Edited by Takagi Ichinosuke 高木市之助 et al. 102 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1957–1967.
NKZ	<i>Nihon koten zensho</i> 日本古典全書. 108 vols. Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1947–1973.
SNKBZ	<i>Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū</i> 新編日本古典文學全集. 88 vols. Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1994–2002.
STTS	<i>Sarvatathāgata tattva saṃgraha sūtra</i> ( <i>Kongō chō kyō</i> 金剛頂經).
SZ	<i>Shingonshū zensho</i> 眞言宗全書. 44 vols. Kōyasan, 1933–1939.
T	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i> 大正新修大藏經. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭 et al. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1932.
TZ	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō Zuzō-bu</i> 大正新修大藏經圖像部. Edited by Ono Genmyō 小野玄妙 et al. 12 vols (reprint). Tokyo: Daizō shuppan, 1988–1989.

## Notes

- The original text can be found in NKBT, vol. 19, pp. 326–28; also, SNKBZ, vol. 18, pp. 460–63 with a translation into modern Japanese. See also [Kleine \(2012\)](#), pp. 24–25). In this article Kleine quotes other similar records by Sei Shōnagon and Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (ca 973–ca 1014) and points out many interesting insights.
- Although the following is based on: [Komatsu \(1994\)](#), chapter 5: “Gohō shinkō ron oboegaki” 護法信仰論覺書, pp. 229–77, especially p. 269); [Komatsu \(1997\)](#), part 4: “Akuryō no jinruigaku” 惡靈の人類學, pp. 215–88, especially pp. 221–22); [Ueno \(2013\)](#), chapter 2: “Yorimashi kaji no tōjō. Sono seiritsu to kigen” ヨリマシ加持の登場——その成立と起源, pp. 77–120); [Oda \(2016\)](#), especially pp. 36–37, n. 6, and pp. 161–208); [Koyama \(2020\)](#), especially pp. 78–104), [Tokunaga \(2020\)](#), p. 115a-b), it's actual expression is my own (in particular, I added the fourth phase: see note 6).
- The term *mononoke* corresponds with the Chinese term *jaki* 邪氣 (evil pneuma) used in Buddhist literature.
- On the definition of the term *genja* (or *genza*), see ([Tokunaga 2001](#); [2022](#), pp. 19–60). Before the study by ([Tokunaga 2001](#)), the common opinion was that *genja* were more or less identical with *shugenja* 修験者 (or *yamabushi* 山伏) although the first was used earlier than the latter. Tokunaga Seiko 徳永誓子, by a meticulous analysis of historical records, showed that this term preceded the apparition of *shugenja* (of which the earliest examples do not predate the mid-13th century), and that it specifically designated a category of exorcist monks performing this precise empowering ritual (*kaji* 加持, Skt. *adhiṣṭhāna*) on occasion of spiritual possessions for healing the diseases caused by *mononoke*. However, this does not mean that there was no link between *genja* and *shugenja*: some of the *genja* of the Heian and later period practiced mountain asceticism for developing magical powers. These *genja* could have contributed to create a sort of basis for the subsequent formation of Shugendō practitioners.
- From around the beginning of the Kamakura period, mediums tended to become professionals; before, possession could occur more randomly, especially in the case of young women who were present at the moment of the exorcism by coincidence (for example maidens serving in the patient's house).
- This ritual identification between the deity and the practitioner is clearly stated at the beginning of the ritual text, *Genja saho* 験者作法, which will be translated at the end this article (see below, p. 8). In my opinion, the relevance of this interpenetration

between the ritualist and the main deity has not been sufficiently stressed in the previous studies. However, Komatsu Kazuhiko takes into account the relationship between the practitioner, the Dharma protector, and the main deity, which, in the specific case he analyzes, corresponds to the King of Wisdom Acala and his acolytes (Komatsu 1997, pp. 257–58).

7 Note that although some historians use the word “*gohō dōji*” 護法童子, this word came into use only later, around the 14th century (there are examples in the Keiran shūyōshū 溪嵐拾葉集, T. 76, 2410: 783c5, 799a2). Moreover, the verb *karu* 驅る (or 狩る) means “to hunt”, and *utsusu* (移す) means “to move.” In fact, the expression *kariutsusu* is exceptional and appears only in the context of healing rituals. A more current expression is *karidasu* 驅り出す, which can be used in real hunting: for example, when the hunter or the dogs drive rabbits out from a bush, one can refer to this action using the verb *karidasu*. This expression can also be applied in the context of exorcisms. However, there is an important semantic nuance: *karidasu* implies that the ill-causing spirit is *inside* the patient’s body, while *kariutsusu* implies that the spirit may be rather *outside* of the body, very close to it or sticking to it. On the other hand, the term *tsuku* 憑く, which indicates a spiritual possession, can also mean “to stick to” (*tsuku* 付く, 着く). According to the Japanese language, it seems that in ancient time possession referred to a spiritual being that “stuck to” the body of the possessed person (most typically to his or her back), especially in the case of illnesses. Thus, the term *kariutsusu* was suitable to describe how the spirit was conceived as being “taken off” from the patient’s body by the “hunting” spirit (*gohō*) under the orders of the practitioner. However, in later times (probably after the late Heian period) the expression *karidasu* also came into use, possibly in conjunction with the diffusion of Buddhist rituals, which prioritized Buddhist (or Indian) rationalizations of the possession according to which the possessing spirit was conceived to be *inside*, i.e., “entering” the possessed person’s body (see below, the Indian notion of *āveśa*) (Sakō 2013, pp. 1–2, 56–59; Mori 2019, pp. 98–113).

8 In fact, the first researcher, world-wide, who explicitly identified this Heian period ritual as a Buddhist ritual of *āveśa* seems to have been Michel Strickmann, in his dissertation submitted to the University of Paris in 1991. This is the reason why I decided to open this article with a quotation from that very chapter of Strickmann’s groundbreaking study. See also Strickmann (1996, chapter 4: “Exorcisme et spectacle”, especially p. 458, n. 5).

9 *Yugikyō kuketsu* 瑜祇經口訣, by Dōhan, fasc. 5 (SZ. vol. 5, 129a12-15): 加持男女能令阿尾捨乃至送〔速〕令阿尾捨者。阿尾捨者或經註云縛。是全攝縛惡靈等之義歟。又驗者法云阿尾捨法。是令驗知三世一切事之義也。追可考之。—*Ad Yuqi jing* 瑜祇經, T. XVIII 867 III 268c23-26: 若加持男女口能令阿尾奢口三世三界事口盡能知休咎口若誦一洛叉口能令三界天口所問吉凶事口速令阿尾奢。

10 This passage in the square brackets is omitted in the text of the *Commentary*, which replaces it with the term *naishi* 乃至, which means “from here until.”

11 The text of the *Commentary* as printed in the collection *Shingon-shū zensho* 眞言宗全書 [SZ.] reports the character 送, which is a typo for 速. See the quoted text of the *Sūtra* in note 9.

12 The classical study on the complex development of *āveśa* rituals in India is (Smith 2006). For the Chinese Buddhist Tantra field, see especially Strickmann (1996, chapter 4, “Exorcisme et spectacle”, pp. 213–41); R. W. Giebel (2016). Oda Etsuyo 小田悦代 and I are compiling a “database of *āveśa* rituals” in the Indian Esotericism Section of the Taishō Canon. See “*Āveśa Dētabēsu*” アーヴェエシヤ・データベース, I-V, 2019–2021 (in Japanese), which can be downloaded from my Academia.edu page, <<https://independent.academia.edu/NIyanaga>> (last access on 20 November 2021). —Another important keyword in the phenomena of possession is *baku* 縛 or “binding” or “immobilization” (probably related to the Skt. root √*bandh*-). I think this corresponds to the state of trance, and is a kind of magical fascination.

13 *Genja sahō*, in *Sahō-shū*, Ashiwara Jakushō 葦原寂照, ed., Ōsaka, Taiyūji 太融寺, 1908, folio 51 verso: 阿尾捨行。唐云攝縛行 (Ueno 2013, p. 113, n. 27). This book is available at the Digital Library of the National Diet Library, <<https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/819330>> (last access on 29 August 2021). I will use this edition in the following pages (*Genja sahō*: folio 51 verso to 55 recto).

14 See (*Mikkyō daijiten* 1983, p. 471a-b), .s.v. “*Genja sahō*” 驗者作法; and *ibid.*, pp. 772c–773a, s.v. “*Sahō-shū*” 作法集. See also the detailed bibliographical data in Ueno (2013, especially pp. 86, 113–14, notes 27–29). There is another manuscript of *Genja sahō* (from the Edo period), available at <<https://kotenseki.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/200007641/>> (last access on 29 August 2021); a *yomikudashi* version based on the edition by Ashiwara Jakushō is available in *Kokuyaku Mikkyō* 國譯密教, *Jisō-hen* 事相編, vol. 3, general editor Tsukamoto Kengyō 塚本賢暁, Tokyo: Kokuyaku Mikkyō kankōkai 國譯密教刊行會, 1921 [reprinted by Tokyo, Kokusho kankōkai 國書刊行會, 1976], pp. 498–502 (available also at <[http://dl.ndl.go.jp/view/pdf/digidepo\\_953022.pdf?pdfOutputRanges=254-263&pdfOutputRangeType=R&pdfPageSize=>](http://dl.ndl.go.jp/view/pdf/digidepo_953022.pdf?pdfOutputRanges=254-263&pdfOutputRangeType=R&pdfPageSize=>), last access on the 29 August 2021). Another modern printed edition edited by Kawasaki Kazuhiro contains various explanations in modern Japanese; however, the edited text presents numerous mistakes (Kawasaki 2003, pp. 236–68).

15 *Hishō* in 18 fascicles is edited in T. 78, 2489, but this version does not contain the *Sahō-shū*.

16 TZ. 9, 3190: 565a10-16: . . . 驗者作法。

大底准護身作法。用心可用之。嚴範阿闍梨驗者次第可用之。先如形勸請三寶啓事由。我身不肖凡夫。末代僧徒智行共闕。付冥顯有憚。非三寶加護者。恐怖尤多。驗者先護法物付病事有様可問顯也 (云云) . This text is also analyzed in (Ueno 2013, pp. 89–90).

17 TZ. VII 3119 clxiii 355b20-356b25. See Ueno (2013, especially pp. 86–89 and n. 29). Ueno also refers to a manuscript of the Shōmyōji 稱名寺 Library in Kanazawa 金澤 (Kanagawa prefecture) entitled *Genja himitsu sahō* (*Abisha-hō*) 驗者秘密作法 (阿尾捨法) [Kanazawa bunko 金澤文庫 catalogue number 310-8].

18 T. XXI 1202 24b21-25a6. See also (Oda 2021, pp. 3–6 and n. 5).

- 19 Many texts are quoted and analyzed in Ueno (2013, especially pp. 121–216). During the healing rituals, understanding the identity of the ill-causing being was a crucial step. After the acquisition of such information the ritualist could decide what had to be done: expelling demons, offering to a *kami*, or repenting for a deed committed against a dead person, and so on.
- 20 The four versions of this story can be found in: *Uji shūi monogatari* 宇治拾遺物語, fasc. 15, tale 6 (NKBT. vol. 27, pp. 420–22); *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集, fasc. 14, tale 35 (NKBT. vol. 24, pp. 324–26); *Kohon setsuwa shū* 古本說話集, second fasc., tale 52 (coll. Nihon koten zensho 日本古典全書, Tōkyō, Asahi shinbunsha, 1967, pp. 168–72); *Shingon den* 眞言傳, fasc. 2, tale 4 (Dnbz [old edition], vol. 106, pp. 124a–125b). See also Komatsu (1994, pp. 265–67).
- 21 The term *nyūga ganyū* appears only once in the Chinese Canon, in the *Commentary* by Amoghavajra on the *Vajra-sekhara sūtra* (*Kongō-chō-kyō* 金剛頂經, that is the *Sarvatathāgata tattva saṃgraha sūtra* [STTS]), *Jingangding jing dayuqie mimi xindi famen yijue* 金剛頂經大瑜伽祕密心地法門義訣, T. XXXIX 1798 i 813b16–17. A much more frequent term with a very similar meaning is *honzon yuga* 本尊瑜伽, which appears forty-two times in the Indian Tantra Section of the *Taishō* Canon. Although in Japanese Mikkyō 密教 tradition, the latter term seems to have not been coined as a technical term for the ritual identification of the practitioner with the main deity. Anyway, I have shown that in Japanese medieval Mikkyō tradition, this identification could be conceived as a form of *āveśa* or a mutual spiritual possession (Iyanaga 2019b, p. 14a–b).
- 22 The *Byakuhō ku shō*’s section of “*Genja sahō*” specifies that the “principal deity” can be any deity according to the practitioner’s preference, but in practice, it is always Acala: TZ. VII 3119 clxiii 355c15–16: 次本尊呪者。任行者意樂可用何尊。但常不動慈救呪是也 (Next, the charm of the principal deity: this deity may be any [deity] according to the practitioner’s preference. However, it is always the Charm of the Compassionate Salvage of Acala). This Acala’s famous “Mantra of Compassionate Salvage” (*jiku-ju* 慈救呪) is: *Namaḥ samanta-vajrānāṃ caṇḍa-mahāroṣaṇa sphoṭaya hūṃ traḥ hāṃ māṃ* (I take refuge in all the worthies of *vajra*. Oh! Great Terrible and Angry Worthy! Smash! *Hūṃ Traḥ Hāṃ Māṃ*). In Japanese it is pronounced as “*Nōmaku sanmanda bazaradan senda makaroshada sohataya un tara ta kan man*” 囊莫三曼多縛日羅赧口戰爭摩訶路灑拏口娑頗野口昨口怛羅口悍口漫。
- 23 The *Byakuhō ku shō*’s version of the *Genja sahō* begins with these sentences: “An oral tradition says: This ritual is an oral transmission of Jikaku daishi 慈覺大師 [Ennin 圓仁, 794–864; a disciple of Saichō 最澄, 767–822, and second patriarch of the Japanese Tendai school]. For this reason it is a ritual of another sect [than ours]. Its full texts are allowed to be used [by us, who belong to Shingon school? (*Gusho wa saikyo nari* 具書載許也)]. There are no special oral traditions [about this ritual in our school?] (口云。此作法慈覺大師口訣故他門作法也。具書載許也。無殊口傳: TZ. VII 3119 clxiii 355b20–21).” According to Ueno also the incipit of the *Genja himitsu sahō* preserved in the Shōmyōji Library reports that: “An oral transmission of Jikaku daishi says [that this is a] practice of *āveśa*” (慈覺大師口訣云阿尾捨行) (Ueno 2013, p. 87). —See also Iyanaga (2019a, p. 6 and n. 22) where is quoted a question that Enchin 圓珍 (814–891), the fifth patriarch of Japanese Tendai school, sent to “Tang masters” about how to perform an *āveśa* ritual.
- 24 *Ware busshi to narite abisha wo sakusu. Gohōten-tō waga iryoku wo tasuke tamae* 我佛使口作阿尾捨口護法天等口助我威力。
- 25 Another possible interpretation is that, being helped by the power of Dharma protecting *devas*, the practitioner “enters” (Skt.  $\bar{a}\sqrt{vi}\bar{s}$ ), i.e., “possesses”, the ill-causing demon, which would be the same thing as if he had subjugated that demon.
- 26 For this translation I refer to the text edited by Ashiwara Jakushō. See above, notes 13 and 14. See also (Ueno 2013, pp. 86–89; Oda 2016, pp. 165–68; Koyama 2020, pp. 80–86).
- 27 *Waga mi honzon no shō to naru* 我身為本尊性。
- 28 If the principal deity is Acala, his seed syllable is HMMĀM. See (Mikkyō daijiten 1983, p. 1956c).
- 29 I think that this first paragraph concerns not only the first ritual, which follows below, but both the rituals included in the text. In fact, this kind of identification between the practitioner and the principal deity by an act of visualization or *āveśa* is a preliminary rite, which takes place in most of the Esoteric rituals. Nevertheless, I think that in the case of the healing ritual by spiritual possession, it retains a special significance because it enabled the practitioner to identify himself with the principal deity whose servant spirit will work as Dharma protector. On the choice of the “principal deity” (most often Acala), see the above remark in the *Byakuhō ku shō*, note 22.
- 30 The syllable RA represents the element fire. According to the (Mikkyō daijiten 1983, p. 2221c), the letter RA has the basic meaning of “dust (mote)” because it is the first letter of the Sanskrit word *rajas* (same meaning). This term, in Buddhist vocabulary, mainly indicates delusion or worldly attachment, which must be eliminated through the attainment of the *bodhi*. Now, in the Buddhist mystical adaptation of Sanskrit syllabary, a syllable is often used for negating the main or natural meaning ascribed to it. Therefore, in the case of RA, it may mean the negation of “worldly attachments” due to the fact that in the esoteric tradition RA represents the fire element, which burns out all the “dust.”
- 31 The parenthetical sentences in translation correspond to the “in-text notations” (*warichū* 割注) in the original text. Because these in-text notations often have the function of commentarial additions to the main text, they appear as complete sentences beginning with a capital letter and ending with a period in this translation.
- 32 If the deity in question is Acala, his hand gesture corresponds to the seal of the single prong *vajra* (*tokko in* 獨鉷印). For more details see (Mikkyō daijiten 1983, p. 1949c, s.v. Fudō jūshi konpon in 不動十四根本印), and, at the end of the volume, Mikkyō in-zu shū 密教印圖集, p. 46, fig. No. 116. On the other hand, this hand gesture could simply refer to the general seal of the Five Kings of Wisdom. See note 46 below.
- 33 This is one of the typical seals of the Taizōkai 胎藏界 (*garbhadhātu*) ritual and is also called the seal of the element fire (*ka-rin in* 火輪印). (Mikkyō daijiten 1983, pp. 1992c–1993a, s.v. Hōkai-shō 法界生), and Mikkyō in-zu shū, p. 53, fig. No. 230.

- 34 *Vajra-dr̥ṣṭi* is the first of the Four Kinds of Glances (or “eyes”) in the tradition of the STTS: it is classified as the glance of “increasing the fortune” (*zōyaku* 増益, Skt. *paustika*). See (*Mikkyō daijiten* 1983, pp. 936c–937a, s.v. Shishu-gen 四種眼) (with illustration); pp. 677c–678a, s.v. Kongō gen 金剛眼; see also, *ibid.*, p. 2080a, s.v. Ma Ta 麼吒.
- 35 According to Ueno Katsuyuki, the *Genja himitsu sahō* preserved in Shōmyōji Library replaces this sentence with “call the spiritual demon” (*shō gyōki* / *ryōki wo maneku* 招靈鬼) (Ueno 2013, p. 87). The expression *shō ryōkon* in the original text of the “classical *Genja sahō*” does not specify which “soul” the practitioner must call or invite, so that this may also mean to call the patient’s soul; but this is certainly not the case. Koyama Satoko who provides a translation of this text in modern Japanese explicitly paraphrases this passage rendering it as “call the soul who gave the illness” (*yamai wo motarashita reikon wo maneke* 病をもたらした靈魂を招け) (Koyama 2020, pp. 82–83).
- 36 The Three Clans of the *garbha-maṇḍala* are *buddha*, *vajra*, and *padma* (lotus); the Five Clans of the *vajradhātu-maṇḍala* are *buddha*, *vajra*, *ratna* (treasure), *padma*, and *karma*.
- 37 The Four Great bodies of commandments (*vidyārāja*) are the group of the Five Wisdom Kings (see below, note 45) from which Acala is excepted (while the other four are in the *vajradhātu maṇḍala*, Acala is the only one who is not present in this mandala). The group of the Eight Great bodies of commandments includes: Trailokyavijaya, Yamāntaka, Vajrāṭṭahāsa (Daishō 大笑), Mahācakra [or Mahāmaṇḍala] (Dairin 大輪), Hayagrīva, Ajita (Mushō 無勝), Acala, and Padanākṣipa (Buchaku 步擲). This group is discussed in the *Damiao jingang Daganlu Junnali yanman chisheng foding jing* 大妙金剛大甘露軍竿利焰鬘熾盛佛頂經, T. XIX 965 340c12–341a18. See (*Mikkyō daijiten* 1983, pp. 964c–965a, s.v. Shidai myōō 四大明王) and p. 1813a, s.v. Hachidai myōō 八大明王.
- 38 The term *ryōki* 靈鬼 occurs thirty-eight times in different works included in the *Taishō* Canon. Specifically, it occurs seventeen times in an esoteric ritual text dedicated to the *Lotus Sutra* by Saichō (T. LXXIV 2363); three times in a compilation of oral traditions of Tendai esoteric school (T. LXXVI 2410); three times in a compilation of esoteric rituals of Tendai tradition (T. LXXVI 2409); three times in a compilation of Buddhist tales of the Tang period (T. LIII 2122); one time in an esoteric ritual dedicated to the *Human King Sutra* by Saichō (T. LXXIV 2363), and so on. Thus, it is possible to conclude that *ryōki* is particularly frequent in texts associated with the Japanese Tendai school.
- 39 The expression *hōsuimi*, which would literally mean “taste of the water of the Law”, is probably a mistake for *hōmi-sui* 法味水 (*hōm*, Skt. *dharma-ras*, is a well-known expression).
- 40 For the interpretation of this passage, see above, notes 24 and 25.
- 41 The Five Great Vows are specific to Esotericism. These are: 1. I vow to save unlimited sentient beings (*shujō muhen seigan do* 衆生無邊誓願度); 2. I vow to gather unlimited merits and wisdom (*fukuchi muhen seigan jū* 福智無邊誓願集); 3. I vow to learn unlimited rubrics of the Law (*hōmon muhen seigan gaku* 法門無邊誓願學); 4. I vow to serve unlimited buddhas (*nyorai muhen seigan ji* 如來無邊誓願事); and 5. I vow to realize an unsurpassable *bodhi* (*bodai mujō seigan shō* 菩提無上誓願證). See (*Mikkyō daijiten* 1983, p. 615a–c, s.v. Godai gan 五大願).
- 42 This mantra appears in the *Vajrasekhara sūtra* where the Four Kinds of Glances are enumerated (see note 34 above). The third glance, *funnu-gen* 忿怒眼 (Skt. *krodha-dr̥ṣṭi*, angry glance), is the one used in the subjugation ritual. The direct source of the mantra, with the same characters, can be found in the *Abbreviated translation* by Vajrabodhi, the *Jingangding yuqie zhong lüechu niansong jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經: T. XVIII 866 i 226a8: 唵句句嚧陀哩嚧瑟底 (丁以反) 奚 (丁以反) 吽發. See also Horiuchi (1983 p. 233, § 370, no. 3 and note \*5 [p. 234]) where the Sanskrit original is given. The particular seating position (Skt. *āsana*) of squat (Skt. *utkuṭukāsana*) is also prescribed in connection with this glance (T. 866 i 226a4–5).
- 43 The two syllables *Hūṃ Phaṭ* are typically used in subjugation rites. See the *Vairocanābhisambodhi Sūtra*, T. XVIII 848 vii 53a21; (*Mikkyō daijiten* 1983, p. 1819c, s.v. Hatta 發吒).
- 44 *Gessha* 轅車 corresponds to the Skt. *gaccha*, meaning “to go.” This mantra is used at the end of rituals, when the practitioner sends off the invited deities from the ritual sacred area. See (*Mikkyō daijiten* 1983, p. 1926a, s.v. Buzō 奉送).
- 45 There are various sets of Five Kings of Wisdom but the most common one (in the Shingon school) is constituted by: Acala, Trailokyavijaya, Amṛta Kuṇḍalin, Yamāntaka and Vajrayakṣa. See (*Mikkyō daijiten* 1983, pp. 618c–619a, s.v. Godai myōō 五大明王).
- 46 For more details on this hand gesture see (*Mikkyō daijiten* 1983, p. 618a–b, s.v. Godai-son sō inmyō 五大尊總印明); pp. 583c–584a, s.v. Goko-in 五股印; and, at the end of the volume, *Mikkyō in-zu shū*, p. 43, fig. No. 67.
- 47 See note 22 above.
- 48 *Vidyādhara* is a special category of practitioners, common in Indian religions (Jaina, Buddhist as well as Śaiva): half imaginary, half real, who were represented as “super-magicians.” They had played a crucial role in the formation of Tantric movements. It is interesting that the practice of *āveśa* rituals is associated with *vidyādhara* in this Japanese text. See Iyanaga and Etsuyo (Iyanaga and Etsuyo 2019–2021), “Āveśa Dētabēsu” アーヴェーシャ・データバース, V (<[https://www.academia.edu/58698796/Avesa\\_database\\_05](https://www.academia.edu/58698796/Avesa_database_05)>), pp. 82–92 (in Japanese) (last access Saturday; 20 November 2021).
- 49 The text edited in Kawasaki Kazuhiro’s *Seigen Sahō-shū*, p. 238: 所以解結之時為本故 is truncated; this is a mistake for: 所以解結之時為鬼被取。或臨終之時心非寂靜。佛法以慈悲為本故 (see Ashiwara’s edition, folio 53 recto).
- 50 The Four Universal Vows, common to Exoterism as well as Esotericism, are: 1. I vow to save all living beings without limit (*shujō muhen seigan do*); 2. I vow to put an end to all afflictions and delusions however numerous (*bonnō musū seigan dan* 煩惱無數誓願斷); 3. I vow to study and learn all methods and means without end (*hōmon mujin seigan gaku* 法門無盡誓願學); and 4. I vow to become perfect in the supreme Buddha-law (*butsudō mujō seigan jō* 佛道無上誓願成) (see *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*



<[http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?56.xml+id\(%27b56db-5f18-8a93-9858%27\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?56.xml+id(%27b56db-5f18-8a93-9858%27))> (shi gu seigan 四弘誓願) (last accessed on the Tuesday; 31 August 2021).

- 51 The text does not specify what this expression is referring to.
- 52 This is the mantra of the Four Gathering Bodhisattvas (*shishō bosatsu* 四攝菩薩, *saṃgraha-bodhisattva*) of the Vajradhātu *maṇḍala*: Kongō-ku Bosatsu 金剛鉤菩薩 (Vajrāṅkuṣa, Bodhisattva of the Hook of Diamond); Kongō-saku Bosatsu 金剛索菩薩 (Vajrapāśa, Bodhisattva of the Rope of Diamond); Kongō-sa Bosatsu 金剛鍊菩薩 (Vajrasphoṭa, Bodhisattva of the Chain of Diamond); and Kongō-rin Bosatsu 金剛鈴菩薩 (Vajraghaṅṭā, Bodhisattva of the Bell of Diamond). These bodhisattvas are placed on the four borders of the inner precinct of the Vajradhātu *maṇḍala*. Being at the “interface” between the “outside” and the “inside”, they have the function of gathering and pulling beings from outside into the inner precinct of the mandala. In other words, they act to subjugate and convert those beings who initially were outside of Buddhism. Their mantras are significant: *jaḥi* is used to express the act of pulling elephants (and beings) by catching them with a hook; *hūṃi* is an interjection to signify a terrible action (subjugation): the Bodhisattva Vajrapāśa pulls beings with a rope; *baṃi* represents the action of attaching beings with a chain (the Sanskrit root  $\sqrt{bandh-}$  means “to bind”); finally, *hoḥi* is said to express the bliss of joining together: this would correspond to the voice of ecstasy during the sexual intercourse. If this interpretation is correct, it is possible to represent all the series of these Four Bodhisattvas as four impetuous phases of the sexual intercourse: one would first catch the beloved being (or object of desire) using a hook; one would then pull him or her with a rope, and tie him or her up with a chain; finally, one would have intercourse with him or her and have the bliss. On the other hand, the last of these Four Gathering Bodhisattvas, i.e., Bodhisattva Vajraghaṅṭā, is also named Vajrāveśa—that is, Bodhisattva of *āveśa* of Diamond (if the sexual metaphor is valid, this may mean that *āveśa* itself is conceived as a sexual union; and this implicit significance may be clear if the action of *āveśa* is interpreted as a *penetration*). I think that the bell is used as a percussion instrument, to let the medium enter the state of possession. Thus, we can understand that these four *bodhisattvas* have the function of taking beings from outside, and making them *enter* ( $\bar{a}\sqrt{viṣ-}$ ) inside the Buddhist truth. This is certainly the reason why this four syllable-mantra is used in this ritual of *āveśa*.
- 53 In fact, the youth should have trembled when the Protector spirit first entered his body.
- 54 See the *Subāhu-paripṛcchā*, T. XVIII 895A ii 728c6-28 corresponding to T. XVIII 895B iii 742b27-c12. This text is partly translated by Michel Strickmann (Strickmann 1996, pp. 222–26, especially p. 225).
- 55 This mantra can be found in several texts included in the Indian Esoteric Section of the *Taiśhō* Canon, with the same characters, or with somehow different characters. Those with the same characters include, for example, the mantra of wearing the armor (*nikō* 被甲) in the *Ritual Offerings According to the Susiddhikara Sutra Method* (*Suxidi jieluo gongyang fa* 蘇悉地羯羅供養法) translated by Śubhakarasiṃha: T. XVIII 894 ii 697b20-21; another one is found in the *Dhāraṇī Sutra of [Avalokiteśvara] Cintāmaṇi cakravartin* (*Ruyilun tuoluoni jing* 如意輪陀羅尼經) translated by Bodhiruci: T. XX 1080 191c16-17. Among those with other characters, there is for example the last part of a *dhāraṇī* of the seal of a great spreading of flowers (*dai sange in darani* 大散華印陀羅尼), in the *Collection of Dhāraṇī Sutra* translated by Aṭīkūta: T. XVIII 901 iv 821b17-18 (I owe the information on the *dhāraṇīs* with other characters to a personal mail from Ms. Yamano Chieko 山野千恵子 of Renge-ji bukkyō kenkyūjo 蓮華寺佛教研究所, Tokyo). I asked Ms. Yamano to restore the Sanskrit of this mantra and make a tentative translation of it. I would like to express my deep gratitude to her for her kind help. Ms. Yamano pointed out to me another restoration into Sanskrit supplied by an interpretation of this *dhāraṇī* in the translation by Zhitong 智通 (early seventh century) of a *dhāraṇī sutra* dedicated to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara with a thousand eyes and thousand arms: *Qianyan qianbi Guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神經 T. XX 1057A ii 88a4-5 (Murakami 2019, p. 189). Although in the *Genja sahō* this mantra is labeled as having the power of protecting the body (or of wearing the armor according to the *Ritual of Offering of the Susiddhikara Sutra*), its original meaning seems the praising of the virtues of incense during offering rituals.
- 56 This is again a new reference to the first of the Four Kinds of Glances: the Glance (or “eyes”) of *vajra*, which increases the fortune (see above, note 34): this glance is characterized by the syllables *MA* and *T*. The ritual manual of *vajradhātu* by Amoghavajra, the *Jingangding lianhuabuxin niansong yigui* 金剛頂蓮華部心念誦儀軌 (T. XVIII 873 300b17-24) writes: “Put on your two eyes [the syllables] *MA* and *T*, which you must visualize as Sun and Moon. With two hands, make *vajra* fists, and put them on both sides of your waist. You will see all around in the empty sky [all] the *buddhas*; each of them is rejoicing [to receive] all the incenses and flowers, and other offerings. Thanks to this glance, you eliminate the impure and become pure. You will get rid [of all the obstructions] and realize the sacred area. The mantra says: *OM vajra-dṛṣṭi MA T* (唵嚩日囉 (二合) 涅哩 (二合) 瑟致 (二合) 麼吒).” According to Toganoo Shōun 桐尾祥雲 (Toganoo 1982, pp. 328–29) who studied the original Sanskrit of this mantra, the Sun is associated with the syllable *MA* because of the Sanskrit expression “*marīci-mālī*” meaning “garland of beams”, which is another appellative for the Sun; while the Moon is associated with the letter *T*, because the crescent Moon can be called *uḍu-rāt*, and *T* is the last letter of this expression. On this latter point, he refers also to a passage of the mahāyānist *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* (T. XII 374 viii 413c13-14) which says: “*T* [is the sign of a deity] manifesting a half body in Jambudvīpa, delivering a speech for [the praising of the Buddha’s] Law: this is just like a crescent Moon. This is why [it, i.e., the Moon?] is named *T*” (吒者於閻浮提現半身而演說法。喻如半月。是故名吒).
- 57 See the previous note.
- 58 I was unable to identify the source of this method.
- 59 *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 T. XVIII 901 viii 858b5-13: 若病人家遣使。請喚呪師來時。使到師邊。若其面向西南西北。此病不差。亦不得去。呪師莫去。若被貴人喚不得已去者。自作護身印。至心誦呪二十一遍然後乃去。到於彼處即放還來。更不留連。若下凡人不去最好。去而無益即失名聞若病人家使到師邊。若其使者。以學左手數數摩面。呪師莫去若去不來。貴人賤人同如前法。
- 60 A recent article by Tokunaga Seiko is a good survey of Japanese studies on the subject, of last twenty years (Tokunaga 2020).

- 61 T. XII 365 343a19-20: *Zhufo rulai shi fajie shen, bianru yiqie zhongsheng xinxiang zhong* 諸佛如來是法界身。遍入一切衆生心想中。 It must be noted that this sutra, of which “translation” is traditionally ascribed to Jiangliangyexie 量良耶舍 (*fl.* 424–442), was very probably written in southern China during the 5th century.
- 62 Since this sutra was probably written in China, the correspondance of the term *bianru* with the Skt. *āveśa* is uncertain. However, the equivalence of this Chinese expression with the Skt word in Buddhist terminology is well established.
- 63 This is a famous statue preserved in Rokuharamitsu-ji 六波羅蜜寺 in eastern Kyoto. See an image at <[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Kuya\\_Portrait.JPG](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Kuya_Portrait.JPG)> (last accessed on Sunday; 22 May 2022).

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